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ABSTRACT

The Parent Involvement Program was designed to help low-income disadvantaged mothers teach their young children during the infant and toddler stages at home to help prepare them for later school entrance. The first of two sessions began in the spring, 1972, with 19 mothers participating. A tutor visited each mother for one hour each week to discuss specific aspects of child development and to provide her with specific related activities to work on with her child. The mother was asked to spend at least 15 minutes a day working with the child on the activities. One of the main objectives of the program was to give the mothers practical information with which to better understand both her child and her child's development. Most important, the activities were to serve as a bridge for mother-child interaction. The program initially consisted of 16 lessons. The Survey of Parent Attitudes was administered to each mother in an interview upon the completion of lesson 7. Each mother filled out a weekly progress sheet reporting the child's progress with the activities. After a break, the second session began with 15 of the same mothers. The program was considered successful: (1) there was a large increase in the amount of mother-child interaction; (2) mothers were a little more understanding of child behavior; and (3) children improved physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially. (KM)

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THE PARENT INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

A FINAL REPORT

Russell A. Dusewicz

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Bureau of Research and Related Services
West Chester State College
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INTRODUCTION

Parents as Teachers

In our modern society, the teaching of children has traditionally been relegated to that brand of professional whom we more commonly refer to as a "teacher." Parents have been typically assigned a more passive role in their child's formal education and frequently are urged by the education profession to avoid any direct attempts at formal instruction in the home as such efforts might prove incompatible with that taught in school.

More recently, however, the involvement of parents directly in the education of their child at the preschool level is being rediscovered as a valuable aid to the child's development. Studies on modeling have indicated that older significant persons in the life of the child often serve as models whose qualities and behavior the child attempts to emulate. In summarizing research on the actual effect or influence of such models, Bronfenbrenner (1968), concludes that measurable changes in the behavior of a child are facilitated by exposure to models exhibiting the desired behavior at an appropriate level of understanding for the child. The effect or influence of such models is even enhanced: whenever there is strong emotional involvement present between the child and model; whenever complex patterns of interaction exist; whenever the model is perceived by the child as having high status; and whenever the model represents a group or affiliation of which the child is a member or of which the child is desirous of becoming a member.

A child's parents are in the rare position of possessing all of the above criteria for exerting a very powerful influence on a child's

developing behavior patterns through use of the modeling process. Moreover, the phenomenon of modeling represents probably the most important impetus toward involving parents in the educational activities of their children. If parents are given the opportunity, motivation, and exposure to the kinds of instructive and enjoyable activities which aid the development of their children, they can contribute greatly to the building of a firm foundation for their children's formal learning experiences. It follows then that any appreciable and enduring improvement in the child's development can be effected only through an appreciable and enduring change in the behavior of persons intimately associated with the child on a day to day basis (Bronfenbrenner, 1968).

From the very inception of Project Head Start in 1965, parent involvement was viewed as an important component, and many studies were done on the precise role played by parents in the development of their children. But here the concern with parents was only a secondary one and greatly subordinated to the center-based Head Start concept in which children were taught and cared for by a trained staff of teachers and paraprofessionals.

Parent Training Programs

One of the early programs in which parents were of a more central concern was conducted at the University of Vermont (Samenfink, 1967). This pilot project involved five low-income families during the first year and the original five plus six middle class families during the second year of operation. While possibly the greatest service it may have offered was assurance and support, this program seemed to demonstrate that the way to a child's development is through the

parents and more particularly the mother who often is at home with him most of the day.

The Parent Education Project at the University of Florida (Gordon, 1967) has adopted the approach of teaching low-income mothers to teach low-income mothers how to stimulate their infants. Relying heavily upon the normative work of Gesell, Cattell, and Bayley for the organization and sequencing of stimulational materials, emphasis was placed upon modeling for the mother who in turn would model the specified behavioral pattern for the child. Although there was some attrition on the part of the participating mothers because of declining interest and moving out of the immediate geographical area, the program was able to demonstrate the viability of the concept and its continued workability over time. There was also some evidence of beneficial effects upon the children as measured by testing at six months and one year.

The Ypsilanti Home Teaching Project (Weikart & Lambie, 1968) was an experimental effort designed to test the feasibility of sending teachers into the homes of disadvantaged families for the purpose of providing a training program for the mother as well as a tutoring program for the preschool child without an accompanying classroom program. Only four year olds and their mothers were included in the experimental sample. The program was individualized and involved a one and one-half hour visit each week. An attempt was made to raise the intellectual functioning of the child through direct child-teacher interaction, while at the same time attempting to foster teaching and child management skills in the mother through mother-teacher inter-

action. Although acceptance of the project on the part of the mothers was quite good, results of testing on the Stanford-Binet and on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test yielded no significant differences between the experimental children and a control group of children.

Clarizio (1968) attempted to provide a different type of approach, with emphasis upon small group meetings and counseling for parents. Three groups of four to five-year-old children were used: two experimental and one control. Children in both experimental groups were enrolled in an eight-week summer Head Start program. The parents of one of these experimental groups were involved in small group meetings with staff as well as meetings in which guest speakers appeared. Parents of the other experimental group received the same treatment as above with the addition of an experienced social worker. The third group, the control group, was not involved in either Head Start or parent activities. Results on the Teacher Rating Scale showed changes in the predicted direction, but these were not significant.

In a study by McCarthy (1968), the effect of parent involvement was assessed in three groups of families whose children attended Head Start classes. For one group an individual home visit plan to work with the parents was undertaken. In another group, parents were involved only to the extent of attending periodic group meetings. In the third group, no effort was made at all to work with the parents of the participating children. Pre- and posttesting on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) and the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities (ITPA) yielded results showing significant gains for the

home visit group on the ITPA and exhibited a significant positive change in parent attitudes as measured by the Parent Attitude Survey (PAS). No significant gains on the ITPA or the PAS were shown for any of the other parent groups, nor were significant gains on the PPVT detected for any of the three groups.

A study conducted at the Demonstration and Research Center for Early Education (Forrester, 1971) involved the training of 20 low-income mothers to provide cognitive stimulation for their seven to eighteen-month-old infants. A home visitor worked in each home for approximately a one-hour period for a maximum total of twenty-four home visits. During the visits, attention was given to physical and social aspects of the home environment. The home visitor demonstrated and reinforced adult behavior patterns which provided for the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of the infant. Results of pre- and posttesting indicated significantly higher scores for the experimental group over a control group on the Bayley Mental Scale, the Griffith Mental Development Scale, and the Uzgiris-Hunt Infant Psychological Development Scale. Overall, the program appeared to be most successful in influencing favorably several areas of infant intellectual functioning.

The general inconclusiveness of results of parent-centered programs in the area of compensatory education (with the exception of Forrester, 1971) coupled with the lack of specific information as to the nature of change in the parent-child relationship fostered by such programs, thus provided the major impetus toward initiating the present Parent Involvement Program.

THE PROGRAM

Description

The Parent Involvement Program was an integral part of the Pennsylvania Research in Infant Development and Education (PRIDE) Project (Dusewicz, 1972; Dusewicz and Higgins, 1971; 1972). It was designed to encourage and to help low-income disadvantaged mothers teach their young children many things in the home during the infant and toddler stages of development in order to help prepare them for later entrance into a preschool or regular school environment. The program began in the Spring of 1972 with nineteen mothers participating. These participants were randomly selected from the mothers of the forty disadvantaged children enrolled in the infant group (12-20 months) of the PRIDE project. The mothers were then contacted and a convenient time for the tutor's visits to the home was set up. The tutor visited with each mother for a one-hour period each week to discuss specific aspects of child development and to provide her with specific related activities to work on with her child. The mother was asked to spend at least fifteen minutes a day (one hour and a half per week) working with the child on the activities. The mother was encouraged to choose a time for these activities which would remain fairly consistent during the program during which there would be few distractions for both the mother and the child.

One of the main objectives of the program was to give the mothers a practical reservoir of information from which to build a better understanding of both her child and her child's development. The program, therefore, also stressed the types of activities which would help her child grow physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially. Most important, however, was the idea that the activities would serve as a bridge for mother-child interaction and communication.

Discussion Sessions

The discussions for the Parent Involvement Program were designed to last approximately a half-hour each week. All areas of child development were covered. The first six lessons provided general information

on cognitive development, emotional development, social development, and language development in relation to the child's physical growth. The mother was also familiarized with the various stages and principles of physical development. The next nine lessons were concerned with talking about each area of growth in depth. The remaining nine lessons dealt with such subjects as the development of values and moral judgment, childhood illnesses, toy selection, and child care.

Because of the hierarchical development of the concepts throughout the lessons, the mothers were expected to contribute more and more in terms of questions and examples to the lessons. Through the mother's participation, the tutor was able to determine whether the concepts were being presented clearly enough or if the mother was developing any misconceptions about child development. The discussion between the mother and tutor also enabled the mother to better view the application of these concepts to her own child.

Activity Sessions

The discussions formed the background for understanding the concepts which underlie the activities. The second half-hour of each lesson involved discussion of the child's success and problems with the activities from the previous week. The tutor also described the new activities with the mother and answered any questions she may have had about what she did and what the child was expected to do. It was emphasized that the child should be praised and encouraged for trying his best, not for perfection of performance in each activity.

The activities were designed to be fun for both mother and child. If a child had no interest in a certain activity, the mother was not

encouraged to force the child to work with it, but rather to try to interest the child in a different activity.

The materials required for the activities were either common household objects or materials which had been made by the tutor and given to the mother. However, even the prepared materials could have been made by the mother herself if she had the time. For example, the naming of household objects requires the child and the mother to walk through a room and talk about all the objects they see. Some pictures of various household objects are also provided by the tutor. As a supplementary activity, which is done if the mother has time and the child is interested, the mother and child are to sit down with a magazine and simply talk about the pictures they find in there. Nesting and stacking of boxes requires three empty boxes or cans of varying sizes which would normally be thrown away in the trash. On this particular activity several mothers used plastic cups which varied in size. One mother used some cannisters of three varying sizes.

Each week, there was at least one activity which involved motor coordination, one which dealt primarily with cognitive development, another with language, and a fourth activity dealing with emotional growth, social growth, or sensory discrimination. Naturally, these activities were not entirely separate from each other since all areas of the child's growth are well-integrated in most tasks in which he may become engaged.

The activities increased in difficulty and level of cognitive and language skills required of the child to be successful. The increase in difficulty was gradual and the child should have been

able to progress through the activities with success.

The child, for example, was indirectly introduced to colors by matching poker chips with objects of the same color, which did not force the child to learn the names himself. Several weeks later, the child was given a color lotto game in which he gradually learned to recognize names of the different colors by selecting the particular color the mother asked for, telling her what color he had selected, and then, matching that color with the same colcr on the game board.

The activities which teach the concepts of "large," "middle," and "small" sizedness were introduced over the course of five lessons. The child was first exposed to the words by playing with an apple lotto game which involved the various different sizes. The mother gave the child one apple at a time, telling him which size he had. The child was asked merely to match the apples, not to identify the size himself. About ten lessons later, the child was presented with four different objects, each type of object having a large and a small size. The child was asked to identify which of the pair of objects was larger and later, which object was smaller. The next week, the child was asked to sort all the large objects into a large container and then, all the small objects into a small container. The same sequence was used for two more weeks to introduce the concept of a middle sizedness employing the same four types of objects. The mother was encouraged to let the child proceed at his own rate through each step so that at the end of the fifteenth lesson, the child would be well on his way to mastering the rudiments of size discrimination and ordination.

EVALUATION OF PROGRAM

Instruments Used

The Parent Involvement Program initially consisted of sixteen lessons. The Survey of Parent Attitudes (SPA) was administered to each participating mother, on an interview basis, upon the completion of lesson seven. The results of this measure are presented below in the "Survey Results" sections of this report.

A weekly report of each child's progress with the activities was received by the tutor in the form of a progress sheet filled out by the mother. The mother recorded the amount of time she and the child spent on the activities and the amount of success the child experienced in each activity rated on a three-point scale - (1) fast, (2) OK, (3) needs more time. The mother also recorded any problems, questions or comments she may have had during the week.

One copy of this report was given to the tutor and the other copy was kept by the mother. In this way, both the tutor and the mother had previous records of the lessons and could follow the child's progress through the program.

Participant Observations

The most beneficial feedback from the program proved to be the comments about the discussions and the activities made by the mothers during the hour sessions with the tutor. All of the mothers enjoyed the program and felt that they were gaining new insight into their child's behavior and growth patterns.

One of the major developments which many of the mothers attributed to the program was the increase in their child's vocabulary and speech. Not only was the child apparently using more words, which had been

introduced to him through picture identification and the various activities, but he was also speaking more clearly.

After learning the words "smooth" and "rough" through a game of tactile recognition, one child went to all the individuals in her family rubbing their faces and then declaring their skin either smooth or rough. Another child was able to name all the animals which he saw on a farm visit as a result of his mother's work with him on the activities given to her in the lessons. After working on an activity involving the parts of the body, another mother was amazed when her child was able to tell her exactly which part of his leg was scratched.

The mothers were constantly commenting on the large amount of interest which the children displayed in the activities. They felt that this interest was mainly due to the fact that the child was receiving more attention from his mother. For at least fifteen minutes a day, the child had his mother's entire attention. It was also a time when the child would be praised and encouraged while he was engaged in the activities.

The lessons also served as an attention getter with people who visited in the child's home. The mothers made such comments as:

> "Arlene always wants to show off when we have company. She runs to the closet and asks for her activities folder."
>
> "Whenever someone comes, TiTi is always there showing them what she can do."
>
> "As soon as his Daddy comes home, Drew will get the materials and show him how to do them."

The older children in the families also took an interest in their preschool sibling. Often if the mother had trouble getting the child

interested in a certain activity or did not have enough time to work with the child, the older children would work on the activities with the child.

> "Leyda wouldn't follow the directions when I would do them with her, but if her brother and sisters would do them too, then she would do them."
>
> "Drew's sisters like to play school. They get his materials out and use them for the lessons."
>
> "Beulah's brother likes to color the pictures for her. Sometimes when the older children get home from school, they get all her lessons and have a lot of fun doing them with her."

Although older children were frequently of help to the mother in working with the participating child, if the older one was only a year or two older, the mother sometimes had problems with the older child always wanting to work on the activities with the mother too. In this situation, the older child often dominated the activity time by showing that he already knew all the answers. He would give the answers or do the activity before the younger child had a chance to respond or participate.

In such a situation, the mother either tried to spend as much time with the older child reading a book or playing some sort of game or she tried to get the older child to help the younger one do his activities when she did not have time. Both solutions were somewhat successful.

The overall Program helped the mother become more aware of the growth and development of her child. Through discussion of the various concepts and the specific problems of her child, the mother felt she understood the child's behavior better at times, and

even had a little more patience with him. The mothers were often amazed at the activities which the child could perform successfully.

The mothers made very few comments about the lecture part of the lessons. About one-third of the mothers were actively involved in asking questions as the lecture proceded and giving examples of what the tutor was talking about. The other two-thirds of the mothers listened, but made only infrequent comments until the activities part of the lesson was reached.

Tutor Observations

There was considerable variance in the extent of participation in the program by the mothers, although they were all very receptive of the program. About a quarter of the mothers worked with their child for at least a half hour every day. Another half worked with the child for the suggested amount of time, sometimes getting an extra five minutes with the child on one or two of the days. The remaining fourth only went through the activities once during the week, which may have amounted to about a half hour at the most before the next scheduled home visit.

For the first couple of weeks, it was very hard to get the mothers to respond to either the lectures or the activities in terms of questions asked of the tutor. However, by the end of the seventh week, all the mothers were responding to a certain extent. This problem of getting to know each other may have been

eliminated if the tutor had had an opportunity for several informal interviews with each mother before the formal program began. In such an interview, the tutor could listen to the problems which the mothers were most concerned about in their child's development and the areas of development which they were most interested in.

Many of the mothers were very hard to contact if the tutor was unable to be there one week or if the mother had not been home for several weeks and the tutor wanted to check to see if anything was wrong. Also, it was very hard for the tutor to know whether the mother was going to be at home at the specified time each week. Most of the mothers made a point of being home and only rarely missed a lesson, but there were a few mothers who were absent more than they were at home. These few mothers got further and further behind in the lessons and finally, dropped out of the program giving as a reason, not having enough time to do the activities during the week.

Because the Parent Involvement Program was started late in the school year, it was decided to extend the program through the summer months. There was a four week break between the two sessions and when the program started again on June 26, 1972, only fifteen of the nineteen mothers were continuing. By the end of the summer, three other mothers had dropped out of the program because of summer jobs and other commitments.

Survey Results

The Survey of Parent Attitudes was designed to evaluate the Parent Involvement Program. In its construction it was divided into two sections: the first to primarily elicit evaluative statements about the program, and the second to elicit theoretical or problem-solving responses to issues or situations central to early childhood development.

Of the 19 participants in the program, 15 were able to be interviewed; 4 were unavailable due to personal reasons. The survey was administered to each of the parents individually in their homes during the course of a week.

In this report each of the survey items will be discussed with respect to intent, content and results. Each item will be numbered according to its order of analysis. The interviewing order is indicated in parentheses. A copy of the items in the interviewing order is attached.

I. Evaluative Items

A. Rationale

1.0 (2) "Why did you get involved in the program?"

1.1 This was meant to determine initial motivation so that parent satisfaction or dissatisfaction could be evaluated based on their expectations.

1.2 RESULTS: Interviewees found this question rather difficult to answer specifically, perhaps because they perceived it as being directly evaluative of themselves. Responses were thus difficult to categorize, but generally 60% indicated that they hoped it would help them to work with their own children and others, possibly in a job situation. The remaining 40% found it difficult to ver-

balize a personal objective; however, both this group and the other 60% during the course of the interview mentioned that a primary factor was the offering of the program in their homes. Most could not have participated on any other basis.

2.0 (3) "Are you planning to ever get a job working with children in day care, preschool or head start? When?"

2.1 This was to directly ascertain vocational interest.

2.2 RESULTS: 47% indicated yes after youngest children are in school; 13% said maybe; 13% didn't know; 27% indicated no.

3.0 (5) "What do you consider to be the important goals or objectives of the program?

3.1 Intended to determine whether there was any difference in perceived objectives of program and parents' expectations.

3.2 RESULTS: 47% emphasized the importance of the parent functioning as a teacher with children; 33% also the importance as residing in the development of the parent-child relationship, but did not express a clear operational idea; 20% did not know what the goals were.

4.0 DISCUSSION: It is clear through these responses that the theme of parent helping child is a prevalent one; the means of accomplishing it are less clear to the persons interviewed. Many could not express exactly why they got into the program; however, when vocational goals were mentioned, 47% indicated a definite interest. These same persons expressed the concept of parent as teacher, indicating a congruence of perceived

program goals and personal motivations.

B. Vocational Evaluation

5.0 (8) "Do you feel better about working with groups of children since beginning the program?"

5.1 Intended to determine perceived effect of program on ability to work with children.

5.2 RESULTS: 73% said yes, generally indicating that they understood children better; 20% didn't know, and 7% didn't think so.

6.0 (11) "Do you think this experience would help you get a job in day care, nursery school or head start?"

6.1 Intended to ascertain perceived practical effect of program, particularly for those with vocational interest.

6.2 RESULTS: A full 80% thought the program would be of vocational benefit, while 20% didn't know whether it would or not.

7.0 DISCUSSION: The vocational interest developed into a strong and consistent one. All parents who had previously (2.0) indicated an interest in preschool work also responded positively to both vocational evaluation items. In addition, 33% who were not vocationally motivated thought the program would be helpful in finding a job.

C. General Evaluation

8.0 (6) "In your opinion are these goals or objectives being accomplished?"

8.1 Intended to pick up major dissatisfactions and possibly elicit suggestions.

8.2 RESULTS: 87% - yes; 13% - don't know. No suggestions offered.

9.0 (7) "Are you learning anything about children that common sense hadn't already told you?"

9.1 Intended to suggest negative slant in balance to general positive orientation of survey and elicit specifics.

9.2 RESULTS: 33% did respond negatively. Of the 67% who responded positively all were emphatic and more than half volunteered specific content such as: increased awareness of children's potential, knowledge of developmental periods, individual differences and terminology.

10.0 (9) "Do you talk to any friends or neighbors about the program? What do they think?"

10.1 Intended to corroborate positive attitude toward program; enthusiasm will be communicated.

10.2 RESULTS: 60% said they did and others would like to get into the program. 13% said yes, but didn't know opinion. 27% said no.

11.0 (12) "Do you think more people should be involved in programs like this one?"

11.1 Intended to elicit general attitude through an impersonal approach.

11.2 RESULTS: 93% responded positively and 7% responded negatively. Suggestions to expand the program were made.

12.0 (10) "What did you like most about the program?"

12.1 Intended to elicit specific positive response and cross check 1.0 and 13.0.

12.2 RESULTS: 60% of the parents expressed a consistent positive response centering on three elements: 1/ the program is brought into the home where close individual work can be done. 2/ parents are learning much about their children and also learning how to teach them, 3/ it is helping the children and developing a closer parent-child relationship. 33% indicated simply that they thought it would help the child. 7% didn't know if they liked anything in particular.

13.0 (13) "What are you getting out of it?"

13.1 Intended to elicit specific positive response and cross check 1.0 and 12.0.

13.2 RESULTS: 60% stressed the self education which was occurring and which would help them to teach children. 27% indicated the satisfaction of seeing their children progress. 13% didn't know.

14.0 (14) "Have you used anything you have learned thus far in the program? Give examples."

14.1 Intended to find out whether specific content of program had been utilized.

14.2 RESULTS: 80% indicated specifics which had been helpful to them. The responses fell into two major categories: 1/ the concept of individual differences and 2/ particular learning activities. 7% thought that everything was helpful, but couldn't mention anything in particular. 13% didn't know.

15.0 (15) "What did you think should be changed when they give the program next year?"

15.1 Intended to elicit criticism and suggestions.

15.2 RESULTS: 80% had no criticisms or suggestions. Three parents

voiced the following opinions: 1/ the materials aren't paced right: each activity should be given more time, 2/ initial level of parent knowledge should be ascertained so time isn't wasted going over things they already know and 3/ there should be parent meetings.

16.0 DISCUSSION: It is apparent from this General Evaluation section that, while generally not able to express critical views, the participants have a very positive attitude toward this program. The only noticeable negative opinion (33%) indicated that some parents consider common sense to be perhaps most important in child-rearing even though these "college" techniques might be helpful. It is interesting to note that all parents who indicated a vocational interest in child care also said that they were learning things beyond the confines of common sense. In their responses parents were generally divided into two groups: 1/ those who grasped the role of parent as teacher and 2/ those who wanted to help their children, but were unable to specify further. It was also clear in the interviews that the participants really appreciated the fact that the program was brought into their homes where they could get individual attention and not be practically barred from the program because they were home-bound.

D. Miscellaneous

17.0 (1) "How long have you been involved in the program (how many sessions)?"

17.1 Intended to identify length of exposure.

17.2 RESULTS: All of the parents indicated involvement since the beginning of the program. It is interesting to note that few knew exactly when that was and none knew how many sessions they had had.

18.0 (4) "Do you enjoy participating in the program?"

18.1 Intended to allow an easy response and an opportunity for interviewer to reinforce subject and elicit general comments.

18.2 RESULTS: 100% answered positively; one parent had reservations.

E. General Discussion and Conclusions

During the course of evaluating the responses to these open-ended questions it became clear that parents orientations could be generally classified as either helping children or teaching children on some questions, and as positive or negative concerning the program on other questions. Scales for relevant questions were thus constructed as follows:

% Responses	Question
	2.1 Are you planning to ever get a job working with children in day care, preschool or headstart? When?
60%	a. V = Vocational interest
27%	b. X = No vocational interest
13%	c. 0 = Don't Know
	3.1 What do you consider to be the important goals or objectives of the program?
47%	a. V = Parent as teacher
33%	b. C = Helping child

% Responses	Question
20%	c. 0 = Don't Know
	5.1 Do you feel better about working with groups of children since beginning the program?
60%	a. V = Yes (Positive)
7%	b. X = No (Negative)
33%	c. 0 = Don't Know
	6.1 Do you think this experience would help you get a job in a day care, nursery school or head start?
80%	a. V = Yes (Positive)
20%	b. 0 = Don't Know
	8.1 In your opinion are these goals or objectives being accomplished?
87%	a. Y = Yes (Positive)
13%	b. 0 = Don't Know
	9.1 Are you learning anything about children that common sense hadn't already told you?
67%	a. Y = Yes (Positive)
33%	b. X = No (Negative)
	10.1 Do you talk to any friends or neighbors about the program? What do they think?
73%	a. Y = Yes (Positive)
33%	b. X = No (Negative)

% Responses	Question
	12.1 What do you like most about the program?
60%	a. V = Parent as teacher
33%	b. C = Helping child
7%	c. 0 = Don't Know
	13.1 What are you getting out of it?
60%	a. V = Parent as teacher
27%	b. C = Helping child
13%	c. 0 = Don't Know
	14.1 Have you used anything you have learned thus far in the program? Give examples.
80%	a. V = Parent as teacher
7%	b. C = Helping children
13%	c. 0 = Don't Know

For the purposes of this analysis non-substantive and non-discriminative questions were eliminated. Each parent response was then independently evaluated and assigned to a response category. Only categories containing actual responses are presented in the scales (i.e. if there were not any "No" responses, that category is not listed in the scale). After all responses had been thus categorized, they were compared with the evaluations made of the same responses for the analyses presented in sections A through D above. Of the total of 180 judgments made,6 (3.33%) were found to not agree. This was interpreted to mean that the subjective error in assigning responses to categories was not significant. The content of the categories is intended to compare vocational interest - parent as teacher with non-vocational interest -

helping child, as well as general positive, negative and non-responses. The results of this analysis are presented below:

Evaluative Items

Questions*

Parents	2	3	5	6	8	9	10	12	13	14	Total
01	V	V	V	V	Y	Y	Y	V	V	C	9
02	V	C	V	0	Y	X	Y	C	V	V	6
03	V	V	V	V	Y	Y	Y	V	V	V	10
04	0	C	0	V	Y	X	Y	V	C	V	5
05	X	0	V	V	Y	X	Y	C	C	V	5
06	X	C	V	V	Y	X	Y	C	C	V	5
07	0	C	X	0	Y	Y	X	C	0	V	3
08	V	V	V	V	Y	Y	X	V	V	V	9
09	V	V	V	V	Y	Y	Y	V	V	V	10
10	V	V	V	V	Y	Y	Y	V	V	V	10
11	V	V	V	V	Y	Y	Y	V	V	V	10
12	V	C	V	V	Y	Y	Y	V	V	V	9
13	V	V	V	V	Y	Y	Y	C	V	V	9
14	X	0	0	0	0	X	X	0	0	0	0
15	X	0	0	V	0	Y	X	V	C	0	3
Total	9	7	11	12	13	10	11	9	9	12	103

*For a listing of questions indicating both the order of administration and the analysis reference numbers see "Evaluative Items Listing," given below.

Parent assigned numbers appear in the first column followed by the question responses. The last column headed "Total" is a score, assigning a value of "1" to each vocational teaching positive response and a "0" score to each other response, thus establishing a range of 0 to 10. As can be seen the distribution of scores tends toward bimodality with the high subgroup having a mean of 9.11 and the low group having a mean total score of 3.5. It is evident that distinct subgroups defined by attitude and motivation exist within the sample. Further, each of the parents in the high group indicated on question 3 that they were interested in pursuing jobs in child care.

The following general conclusions are stated:

1. Parents have a generally positive attitude toward the program.
2. It is important to have the program offered in the home because most parents could not otherwise participate, and the individual attention is perceived to be beneficial.
3. Parents perceived the main value of the program to be helping them to teach, interact with, and guide children.
4. Parents who have a vocational interest in addition to a parental one are more positive toward the program and seem to be getting more out of it.

Evaluative Items Listing

Survey of Parent Attitudes

Anal. Ref.	Admin. Seq.	
17.1	1.	How long have you been involved in the program (how many sessions)?

1.1	2.	Why did you get involved in the program?
2.1	3.	Are you planning to ever get a job working with children in day care, preschool or head start? When?
18.1	4.	Do you enjoy participating in the program?
3.1	5.	What do you consider to be the important goals or objectives of the program?
8.1	6.	In your opinion are these goals or objectives being accomplished?
9.1	7.	Are you learning anything about children that common sense hadn't already told you?
5.1	8.	Do you feel better about working with groups of children since beginning the program?
10.1	9.	Do you talk to any friends or neighbors about the program? What do they think?
12.1	10.	What do you like most about the program?
6.1	11.	Do you think this experience would help you get a job in a day care, nursery school or head start?
11.1	12.	Do you think more people should be involved in programs like this one?
13.1	13.	What are you getting out of it?
14.1	14.	Have you used anything you have learned thus far in the program? Give examples.
15.1	15.	What do you think should be changed when they give the program next year?

II. Theoretical Items

These items were designed to present each parent with a situational

question embodying a primary concept or problem in early childhood development. In general, they were intended to elicit responses which would indicate 1/ whether or not the parents understood what was at issue, and 2/ whether or not they could make a reasonable and constructive response having grasped the problem. Each item will be discussed individually in its order of presentation.

A. Questions

1.1 Some people think that children learn things pretty much automatically as they grow up; others think that children can learn anything at any time if it's taught right. What do you think?

1.2 Concept: early learning and maturation

1.3 RESULTS: 47% thought that children could learn anything; 20% indicated a combination of teaching and maturation; 20% thought children learned only as they matured; 13% failed to understand the question.

2.1 A lot of children have trouble getting along with others because they really get angry when they can't have everything they want. What do you think is the best way to handle a violent temper tantrum?

2.2 Concept: violent behavior

2.3 RESULTS: 33% responded that the behavior was attention getting and should be corrected by diverting energy to another activity and, if that doesn't work, employing physical punishment. 20% suggested immediate physical punishment. 14% thought that the best thing would be to ignore the behavior and let it work itself out. 33% had

no suggestions. It was apparent that this problem was a familiar one and, although some constructive approaches were mentioned, physical punishment was the typical resort. Many parents grasped the attention-getting intent of the behavior, but few realized that their handling of it was reinforcing a perceived undesirable effect.

3.1 Some programs for preschool children try to teach advanced things like reading and math. Do you think such young children can really learn these kinds of things and is it good for them?

3.2 Concept: early childhood potential

3.3 RESULTS: 33% were very positive in their replies; another 27% were positive with some reservations about the learning content. 33% did not think such early learning was possible or good. 7% did not understand the question. The majority of the parents were appreciative of young children's potential; however, the negative replies were substantial and delivered with conviction.

4.1 Jimmy is a boy who is usually selfish with his toys and often hits and pushes the other children when he is in a group. One day he gave his favorite truck to another boy to play with. What would you do to try to make him share like that again?

4.2 Concept: positive reinforcement

4.3 RESULTS: 47% recommended positive verbal reinforcement; 7% also included tangible rewards. 6% indicated coercion through punishment. 40% had nothing to suggest.

5.1 One boy in a nursery school just isn't interested in any of the activities that the other children are doing. He seems to only

like motorcycles and will pay attention to little else while the teachers are trying to work with colors, shapes and other things. What would you do to try to get him involved in the group playing and learning?

5.2 Concept: inattentiveness and motivation

5.3 RESULTS: 53% suggested using the motorcycle as a vehicle for teaching other things, for instance, the shapes and colors involved in motorcycles. 13% said the motorcycles should be taken away and the children forced to attend to the lessons. 34% didn't know what to do.

6.1 Jimmy always seems to be bad when he is with the other children. He hits them, takes the things they are playing with and ruins the activities that are going on. Why do you think he does these things and what is the best way to handle him?

6.2 Concept: aggression, attention and negative reinforcement

6.3 RESULTS: 60% of the parents thought the behavior was caused by a need for attention; 40% didn't understand the problem or its solution. Of those who indicated the need for attention, 44% thought the solution was to give more attention, 44% suggested a change of activities to direct aggression and develop self concept, 11% thought he should be ignored, and 1% thought he should be punished.

7.1 Some people think that the best way of making children behave is to talk it out; others think that the best discipline is a good spanking. What do you think?

7.2 Concept: discipline and physical punishment

7.3 RESULTS: 87% of the parents indicated that a combination of

discussion and punishment are needed to maintain discipline; 7% advocated spanking only, while 6% suggested talking only.

8.1 Sarah is always happy to play with the other children, but she plays her own games almost as though the other children weren't there. Do you think that this is normal and, if so, what kinds of different play relationships will she get into when she gets older?

8.2 Concept: development of play relationships

8.3 RESULTS: 60% thought the behavior normal and that play with others would develop later. 20% thought it not normal and 20% didn't know.

9.1 Children always like to play, but what do you think it does for them?

9.2 Concept: importance of play

9.3 RESULTS: 67% focused on the importance of play for learning and development. 20% saw its major benefit in physical health. 13% emphasized its role in social relationships.

10.1 Jimmy thinks that he is really smart and tough although he can't do a lot of things the other children his age can - like recognizing shapes and colors. How do you think he feels about himself and what do you think about him?

10.2 Concept: self concept and individual differences

10.3 RESULTS: 40% opined that the boy in question had a very poor self-concept and tried to cover it up with a "tough guy" facade. 27% indicated that individual differences were the cause and that a real problem did not exist. 33% didn't know.

11.1 Jimmy is anxious to explore any new thing that you give him. He likes to do everything by himself and learn about it by himself. Do you think this is good and why?

11.2 Concept: curiosity and independence

11.3 RESULTS: 40% thought the behavior was good because exploration is a means of learning and independence is a positive characteristic. Another 40% indicated that it was good but couldn't verbalize the reason. 13% thought it was harmful because children shouldn't do things alone, and 7% didn't know.

12.1 Some people think it's important to teach children to take care of themselves. Do you think this is necessary and why?

12.2 Concept: hygiene and safety

12.3 RESULTS: 40% pointed to the need for personal hygiene and safety training. Another 40% stressed the important of self-protection, particularly when the parents might not be around. 20% thought it was important, but couldn't elaborate.

B. Discussion

These items elicited much comment and several general themes developed. Discipline was a primary concern to the parents interviewed. When the question of procedure was posed directly, the result was a strong consensus (7.1) for a combination of discussion and punishment to effect a behavior change. However, when hypothetical situations suggesting disciplinary problems (2.1, 6.1) were presented, many parents could suggest nothing, or indicated actions that would probably reinforce undesirable behavior. Likewise most parents seemed to understand children's

need for attention, but few could suggest ways of handling it that would not maintain or increase dependence. Very few parents grasped children's aggression as natural and in need of constructive outlets. All parents had some idea of the importance of play; many viewed it as a basic learning experience; few gave the impression of understanding its developmental stages. An awareness of children's self-concept and individual differences was apparent and, in the interviewer's opinion, a result of the parent program. Likewise, an increased awareness of verbal reinforcement, working with children's natural interests and early potential, seemed to be related to participation in the program. The last question was intended to be an easy one which everyone could answer to end the interview positively. It was interesting to find that it was interpreted both as self-care and self-protection. In the latter case the environment is apparently seen as somewhat threatening.

C. General Discussion

In order to present an overview of the responses to the theoretical items the following analysis was performed. Each response was independently evaluated to determine its appropriateness relative to generally held opinions in the early childhood field. A value of +1 was assigned to those responses judged reasonable and constructive. A value of -1 was assigned to those judged incorrect or detrimental. A zero value was accorded to responses indicating a lack of comprehension on the part of the respondent. Totals were then obtained for each individual and each item. The results are presented in the "Theoretical Items" Table.

As can be seen there was a fair dispersion of scores both for items and individuals. The items on violent behavior, aggression, attention and negative reinforcement (2.1, 6.1) yielded the poorest responses; punishment, self-care, and play (7.1, 9.1, 12.1) yielded the best; while the others obtained a very mixed response. These all have implications for program development.

Again as in the evaluative items the distribution of individuals was bimodal with a high group having a mean of 8.67 and a low group with a mean of 2.38. The composition of these subgroups as defined on the various criteria is presented in the "Summary" Table.

Theoretical Items

Questions

Parents	1.1	2.1	3.1	4.1	5.1	6.1	7.1	8.1	9.1	10.1	11.1	12.1	Total
01	+1	-1	0	+1	+1	-1	+1	-1	+1	+1	-1	+1	3
02	+1	0	-1	0	-1	0	-1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	3
03	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	10
04	+1	+1	+1	-1	+1	+1	-1	-1	+1	+1	0	+1	3
05	0	0	-1	0	0	0	+1	0	+1	0	0	0	1
06	0	0	-1	0	0	0	+1	+1	0	0	0	0	1
07	-1	+1	+1	0	0	0	+1	0	0	+1	0	+1	4
08	+1	-1	-1	+1	-1	-1	+1	0	0	+1	-1	+1	0
09	+1	-1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	10
10	+1	+1	+1	0	+1	-1	+1	-1	0	+1	+1	+1	6
11	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	12
12	+1	-1	+1	+1	+1	-1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	8
13	+1	0	+1	+1	+1	-1	+1	0	+1	-1	+1	+1	6
14	-1	-1	-1	+1	0	-1	+1	+1	+1	-1	0	+1	0
15	+1	0	+1	0	0	-1	+1	0	+1	0	+1	0	4
Total	9	-4	4	7	6	-3	11	4	11	8	6	12	71

Summary

Parent	Vocational Interest Subgroup	High Evaluative Subgroup	High Theoretical Subgroup
01	X	X	0
02	X	X	0
* 03	X	X	X
! 04	0	0	0
! 05	0	0	0
! 06	0	0	0
! 07	0	0	0
08	X	X	0
* 09	X	X	X
* 10	X	X	X
* 11	X	X	X
* 12	X	X	X
* 13	X	X	X
! 14	0	0	0
! 15	0	0	0

* Indicates assignment to all 3 listed subgroups.
! Indicates assignment to none of the listed subgroups.

From this display it can be concluded that the persons participating in the program with a vocational interest are prone to evaluate the program highly as well as do better in handling the types of theoretical issues and situations posed in this survey. Finding the cause of this consistent phenomenon would be an interesting pursuit which is outside the scope of the present report. It suggests that professional involvement - training and/or working - may be a vehicle for broadly increasing the quality of childrearing through both enhanced motivation and learning. If a consequent effect on children could be shown, this type of program could prove critical in both manpower training and early childhood development.

Theoretical Items Listing

Survey of Parent Attitudes

1.1 Some people think that children learn things pretty much automatically as they grow up; others think that children can learn anything at any time if it's taught right. What do you think?

2.1 A lot of children have trouble getting along with others because they really get angry when they can't have everything they want. What do you think is the best way to handle a violent temper tantrum?

3.1 Some programs for preschool children try to teach advanced things like reading and math. Do you think such young children can really learn these kinds of things and is it good for them?

4.1 Jimmy is a boy who is usually selfish with his toys and often hits and pushes the other children when he is in a group. One day he gave his favorite truck to another boy to play with. What would you do to try to make him share like that again?

5.1 One boy in a nursery school just isn't interested in any of the activities that the other children are doing. He seems to only like motorcycles and will pay attention to little else while the teachers are trying to work with colors, shapes and other things. What would you do to try to get him involved in the group playing and learning?

6.1 Jimmy always seems to be bad when he is with the other children. He hits them, takes the things they are playing

with and ruins the activities that are going on. Why do you think he does these things and what is the best way to handle him?

7.1 Some people think that the best way of making children behave is to talk it out; others think that the best discipline is a good spanking. What do you think?

8.1 Sarah is always happy to play with the other children, but she plays her own games almost as though the other children weren't there. Do you think that this is normal and, if so, what kinds of different play relationships will she get into when she gets older?

9.1 Children always like to play, but what do you think it does for them?

10.1 Jimmy thinks that he is really smart and tough although he can't do a lot of things the other children his own age can -- like recognizing shapes and colors. How do you think he feels about himself and what do you think about him?

11.1 Jimmy is anxious to explore any new thing that you give him. He likes to do everything by himself and learn about it by himself. Do you think this is good and why?

12.1 Some people think it's important to teach children to take care of themselves. Do you think this is necessary and why?

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The Parent Involvement Program was successful in that the major objectives of the program were achieved. There was a large increase in the amount of interaction which occurred between the mother and her preschool child. The mother was also a little more understanding of the child's behavior in certain situations. Some of their fears about the possible slowness of their child in such areas as toilet training or about a certain behavior such as saying "no" all the time were alleviated through the discussions. Also, all of the mothers witnessed improvements in their child's physical, mental, emotional, and social skills. Finally, some of the mothers by the end of the program found themselves interested in a possible vocation relating to working with preschool children.

Of the two sessions of the program, the Spring session seemed to be much more successful. With the arrival of the long summer days, the participating children lost some interest in the activities if they could not be done outside or if the child had to sit for any length of time during very warm days. The lessons were much harder for the tutor to cover, because all the children in the family were home from school. It was also hard for the mother to devote her attention to the lessons while the children were running around the house or playing outside. Many of the mothers found it easier to work on the activities in the evening, although there were still distractions from the older and younger children.

The second year of the Parent Involvement Program is scheduled to begin the first week of October if sufficient funds are found to support this work. Many of the lesson activities have been revised on the basis of reflection and participant feedback. The activities have been tied in more closely to the discussion part of the lesson and there is now an intervening section to each of the lessons which seems to bridge the gap between the discussion and the activities.

The activities are arranged to gradually increase in difficulty and complexity as the lessons progress. Also, complex concepts may now be carried over several weeks in order to facilitate the child's learning of the concept in a stepwise fashion.

The program now consists of twenty-four lessons which are arranged in a hierarchical continuum - i.e., the same areas of child development will be covered in more and more depth as the program progresses. Summer sessions will be eliminated and a series of informal interviews will take place between the tutor and each mother before the actual program begins.

It is also hoped that a continuation of this program will provide an opportunity for not only reassessment of its effect on participating parents in order to confirm present findings, but also a more objective measurement of its effects through the participating parents upon their children. This might most beneficially be accomplished through standardized pre- and posttesting of the children on cognitive, language, and social measures.

Regardless of the outlook for the future of the program, the successful operation of the Parent Involvement Program during the past year

has given support to prior research relating to the efficacy of such an approach. Moreover, results of the Survey of Parent Attitudes (PAS) yielded very positive findings reflecting on the program in general as well as providing interesting insights as to the types of orientations of parents on the low socioeconomic stratum and the kinds of changes in orientation toward preschool children which were engendered by participation in this Parent Involvement Program.

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